

# Indiana's Response to Intervention Academy



Action Research:

Understanding Evidence and Research  
Based Practices

Loui Lord Nelson

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# Components to Consider

- ❑ Assessment and progress monitoring system
- ❑ Data-based decision making
- ❑ Cultural responsiveness
- ❑ Family, community & school partnerships

# Integrated System for Academic and Behavioral Supports

## Tier 3:

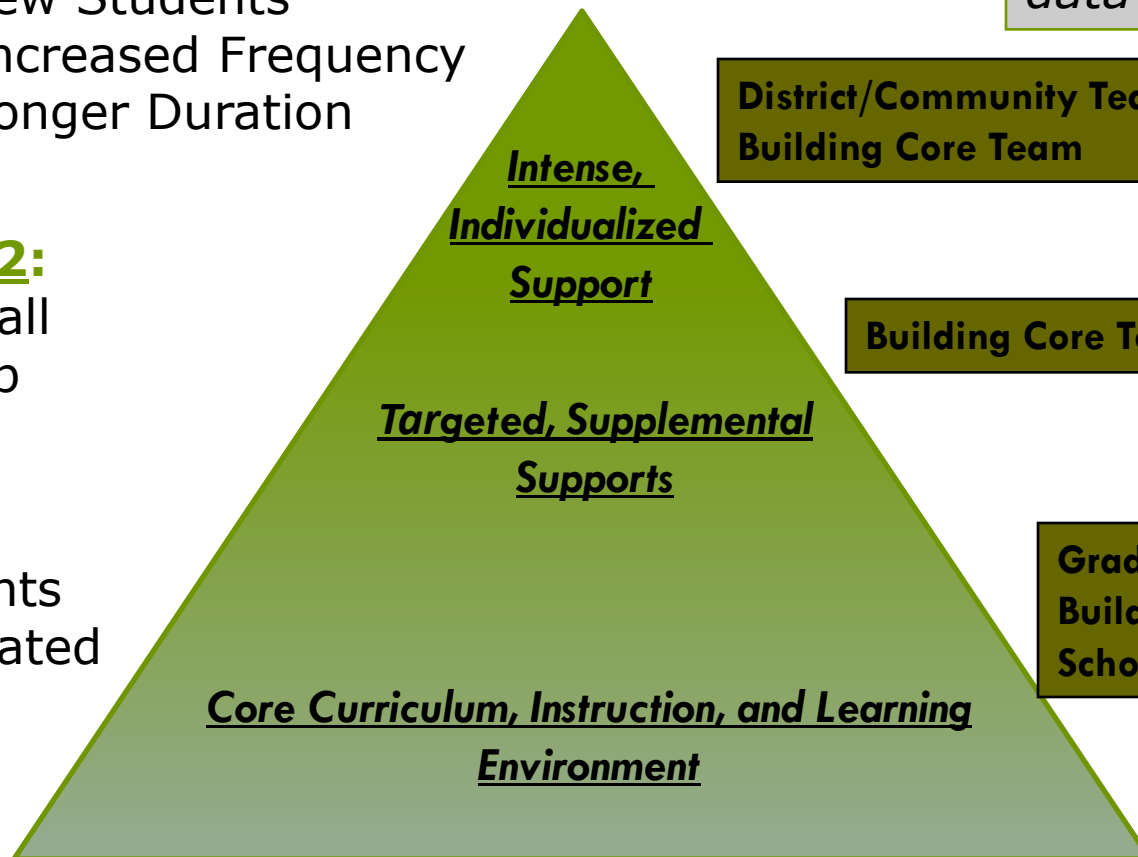
- Few Students
- Increased Frequency
- Longer Duration

## Tier 2:

- Small Group

## Tier 1:

- All Students
- Differentiated
- Flexible



District/Community Team  
Building Core Team

Building Core Team

Grade Level Teams  
Building Core Team  
School Improvement Team

*Services across tiers are fluid and data-driven*

## Preview: Connecting My Presentation to Indiana's Vision of RTI

- ❑ Tier 1: AR can be used to consider effective curriculum, instruction, or learning environments. It can help a team investigate whether instruction is truly differentiated and/or flexible.
- ❑ Tier 2: When investigating the needs of this smaller group of students, AR can assist the group in designating approaches and defining outcomes.

# Preview: Connecting My Presentation to Indiana's Vision of RTI

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- ▣ Tier 3: AR can be used by the participants to define “intense”, “frequency”, and to gather the data necessary to make these and other decisions.

# What is the AR process?

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- ❑ Identify the issue to be researched
- ❑ Identify the research aims
- ❑ Establish a research design
- ❑ Gather data
- ❑ Discover evidence from the data
- ❑ Claim the knowledge
- ❑ Link new knowledge to existing knowledge
- ❑ Obtain feedback about validity of findings
- ❑ Disseminate the findings

# The Top Ten Reasons Why AR is a Preferred Method Among Practitioners

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10. It is conducted by participants rather than a formal researcher.

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9. Focuses on the participants developing a deeper understanding of *what* they are doing rather than the social science method of describing and understanding an external situation.



# The Top Ten Reasons Why AR is a Preferred Method Among Practitioners

8. Moves beyond problem solving. It involves “identifying the reasons for the action which are related to the researcher’s values, and gathering and interpreting data to show that the reasons and values were justified and fulfilled” (p. 13).

# The Top Ten Reasons Why AR is a Preferred Method Among Practitioners

7. Requires individuals to ask questions of themselves, but is a collaborative method based on the commonly agreed upon goal.

# The Top Ten Reasons Why AR is a Preferred Method Among Practitioners

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6. Is responsive to the particular social situation of the environment because the participants determine the research question and data collection method that fits their setting.

# The Top Ten Reasons Why AR is a Preferred Method Among Practitioners

5. Requires first, second and third order learning.

First, individuals learn about the situation.

Second, individuals question what has been learned or what the norm is currently.

Third, individuals ask why the situation is the way it is and how one might need to change the way one thinks about it.

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4. Directly addresses the consequences of action by one individual or group. If person *a* does *X*, then person *b* will experience *Y*.

# The Top Ten Reasons Why AR is a Preferred Method Among Practitioners

3. Promotes (a) personal change through individual learning and, (b) social change through collective learning.

# The Top Ten Reasons Why AR is a Preferred Method Among Practitioners

2. Requires the participants to accept responsibility for the aims of their research because they live within the studied environment.

# The Top Ten Reasons Why AR is a Preferred Method Among Practitioners

1. Requires an inquiry of values and is not neutral in nature. As in all qualitative methods, Action Research requires documentation specific to these ten areas. The documentation is the primary source of validity.

(McNiff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 2003)

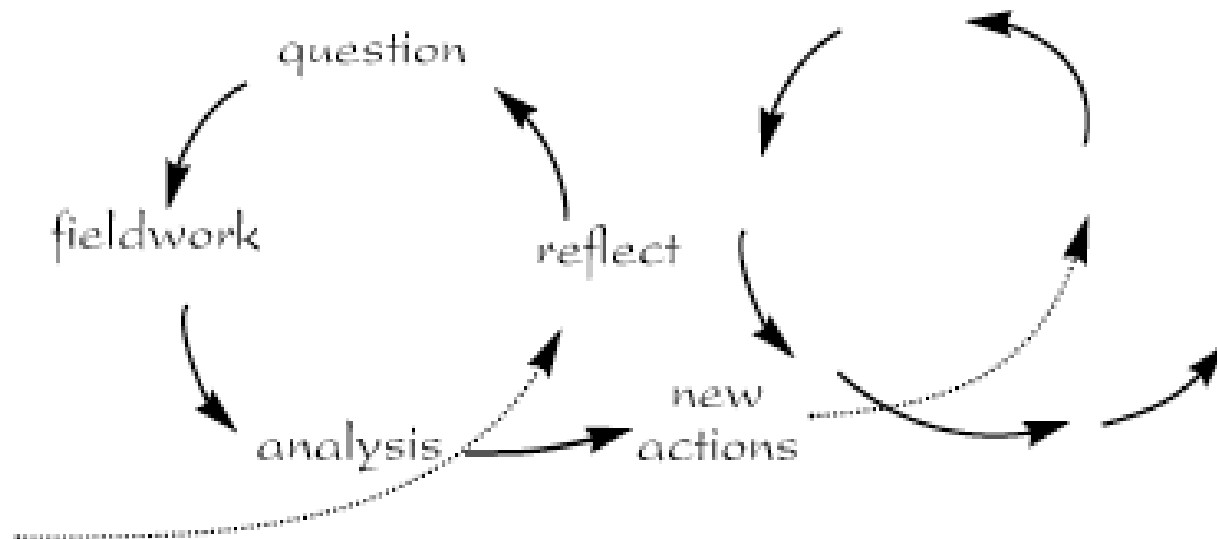


# Building relationships

Through a collaborative partnership, parents and educators have sought answers to the research question they have collectively posed and set into motion strategies to move beyond current barriers and blocks in several Beach Center studies (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2001).

# As explained by Y. Wadsworth

<http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html>



**Fig C. Cyclical Research Process**

## An even deeper look

- ❑ Action Research IS action, not a process followed by action.
- ❑ It is an active co-research by all stakeholders.
- ❑ It is a democratic and non-coercive process when conducted properly.
- ❑ Very close to “learning by doing” and fits well in situations where you’re flying the plane while fixing it.

# Getting Down to It

- ❑ Action Research is a reflective inquiry by an individual or group in order to better understand the environment and improve practice.
- ❑ Action Research is an investigation conducted by the person or people empowered to take action concerning their own actions, for the purpose of improving their future actions.

# Many, many resources

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Action Research as a Living Practice

Dennis J. Sumara

The Action Research Guidebook: A Four-Step Process for Educators and School Teams

Richard Sagor

Qualitative and Action Research: A Practitioner Handbook

Michael P. Grady

Research in Educational Settings

Geoffrey Maruyama & Stanley Deno

Practicing Evaluation: A Collaborative Approach

Rita G. O'Sullivan

Plus 46 more titles on Amazon.com

# Four Stages: Stage 1

## 1. Clarifying Vision and Target

Key Question: What do I want to accomplish?

- decide on your goals
- clarify exactly what will contribute to the success of each goal.
- determine criteria that can be used with *validity* and *reliability* to document improvement.

# Four Stages: Stage 2

## 2. Articulating Theory

Key Question: What do I believe is the approach with the greatest potential for achieving my goals?

- identify their reasons for choosing a particular path or action.
- engage in a planning process.
- examine and include all of the dynamic relationships (all of the different people involved) that might influence success.
- allow the process to lead the group to state its reason for the chosen action (your theory) and answers Stage Two's key question.

# Four Stages: Stage 3

## 3. Implementing Action and Collecting Data

Key questions: What data will I need to collect to understand the worth and workings of my theory of action?

**This step moves the group into action.**

- Carry through the theory of action.
- Compile information (data) on what is going on both above and below the surface.
- Ask what is being accomplished and the relationships between the actions being taken and the results being obtained.
- Generate your research questions to guide your study.
- Develop a viable data-collection plan aimed at producing valid and reliable answer for those research questions.



# Four Stages: Stage 4

## 4. Reflecting on the Data and Planning Informed Action

Key Question: Based on this data, how should I adjust my future actions?

**This completes the first lap around the research cycle.**

- Return and revisit visions/targets from Stage 1.
- Revisit previous thinking on the best way to realize that vision (Stage 2).
- Recognize that Stage 3 data defines the base for the future action plan.

# Applying the Steps

- ❑ Read Scenario
- ❑ Build a plan for using AR
- ❑ Discussion
- ❑ Teams – develop a plan to use AR within your school

## Take Home: Connecting My Presentation to Indiana's Vision of RTI

- ❑ AR is a practitioner friendly method to gather authentic and verifiable data.
- ❑ This data can then be used to alter instructional methods, the classroom/building environment, or provide additional/different supports to a child.
- ❑ The outcomes from AR are meant to be looked at repeatedly through the cyclical process of growth and change within the educational environment.